

---

## Health Care Committee

---

### HB 2399

**Brief Description:** Health Professions Data Collection.

**Sponsors:** Representative Cody.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Department of Health is authorized to send surveys on a biannual basis to health care providers to gather data about the health care work force.</li></ul>
--



**Hearing Date:** 1/13/06

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

The Department of Health (Department) regulates over fifty-seven health care professions. Currently, over 290,000 people hold a health care provider credential issued by the Department.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent to which there is a shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing their numbers. In its 2002 report, the task force noted that there were shortages of health care professionals in several professions including dental hygienists, dentists, medical aides, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and radiology technologists. One of the recommendations of the task force was to "develop a data collection and analysis system to assess health workforce supply and demand." The 2004 report from the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities also recommended that the state identify and collect "relevant and accurate data on health care professionals" as one way to reduce health disparities.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Department is authorized to gather data related to the supply of health care providers and demographics of the health care work force through surveys that will be sent on a biannual basis. In developing the surveys, the Department shall collaborate with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and may seek advice from researchers that are likely to use the survey data.

The surveys may include questions related to:

- Specialty;
- Birthdate;

- Gender;
- Race and ethnicity;
- Hours in practice per week;
- Practice statistics;
- Zip code of the provider's practice;
- Years and locations where the provider has practiced;
- Education and training and where the education and training was received; and
- Types of facilities where the provider practices.

The Department may approve proposals to distribute surveys requesting additional data to individual professions if: (1) there is a legitimate research interest; (2) the burden on members is not unreasonable; (3) the effect on survey response rates is not unreasonable; and (4) funds are available. The Department may accept funds from other entities to support the enhanced surveys.

Data elements from the surveys are confidential and exempt from public disclosure, unless they are released for study and analysis pursuant to a data sharing agreement. The Department shall make a public data set available that maintains the confidentiality of individual health care providers.

The failure to complete a survey may not be grounds for disciplinary action against a health care provider.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 4, 2006.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.